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## ***CAUSES OF DEATH IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH***

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In 2001, the King County Medical Examiner's Office investigated 136 deaths of persons 19 years old or younger, which represented 9% (136/1,578) of the deaths investigated. Of these deaths, 23% (31/136) were of natural manner, 21% (28/136) were accidents, 8% (11/136) were homicides, 28% (38/136) were traffic related, and 10% (13/136) were suicides. There were five (5) deaths of children/youths classified as undetermined manner where the investigation was inconclusive as to whether the death was intentional or not. The King County Medical Examiner participates in Child Death Review, a process which discusses these deaths in detail and suggests prevention strategies.

Of the 31 natural deaths of children and youth investigated by the Medical Examiner, 90% (28/31) were of infants less than one year of age. Of these 28 infants who died of natural causes, 17 were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

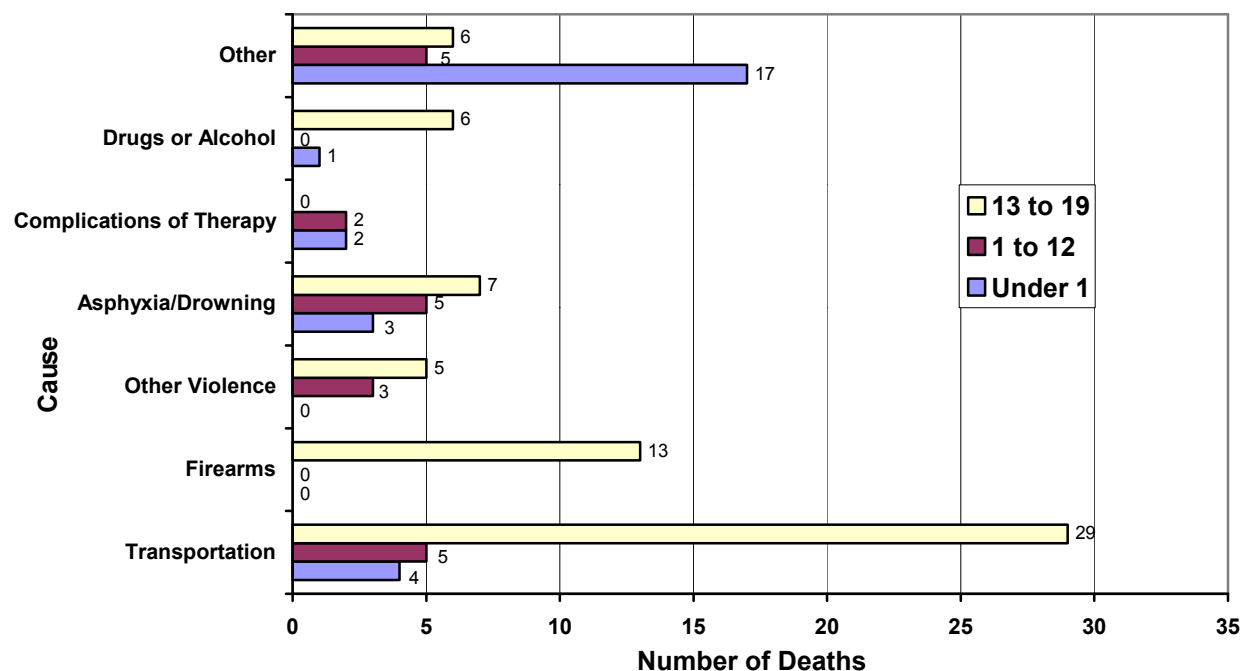
There were 28 children and youth whose deaths were classified as accidental, excluding traffic-related accidents. Another 38 children and youths died in traffic related accidents.

There were 11 homicides among children and youth. Of these 11 homicide victims, 10 were teenagers, 13 through 19 years of age, and 1 was a child under 12 years. Sixty-four percent (7/11) of the children and youth homicide victims died by firearms.

There were 13 youth suicides, between the ages of 13 and 19 years. Males comprised 77% (10/13) of the victims. Regarding the methods used to commit suicide by youth, seven (7) were by firearms, three (3) by hanging and three (3) by jumping from heights. There was one female youth suicide from drugs in 2001.

Thirty-eight (38) children and youth 19 years and under died in traffic-related accidents, of whom 29 (76%) were teenagers. There were 10 motor vehicle driver deaths and 19 motor vehicle passenger deaths. One (1) teenager died as the result of a bicycle accident. Seven (7) teenagers died as pedestrians. There was one motorcycle caused teenage death in 2001. Of the 29 children and youths who died in motor vehicles, 24% (7/29) were known to be restrained and 76% (22/29) were unknown if they were using seatbelts or any other restraint device. For the one (1) nineteen year old bicycle rider death, there was no evidence of a helmet being worn.

The following tables list the causes of death among children and youth for all manners in three age groups: under 1 year, 1-12 years and 13-19 years.

**Graph 11-1 Non-Natural Causes of Death in Children and Youth <sup>1</sup>****Table 11-1 Causes of Death: Children Under 1 Year**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB	
	A	H	S	T	U	N	TOTAL	TOTAL
Miscellaneous	5	0	0	4	1	17		27
Asphyxia	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
Automobile Passenger	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
Aspiration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Blunt Impact	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Drugs	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Complications of Therapy	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
SIDS	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	
Natural Disease - Others	0	0	0	0	0	11		11
Total	5	0	0	4	1	28		38

<sup>1</sup> Natural deaths excluded.

**Table 11-2 Causes of Death: Children 1 to 12 Years**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Transportation related	0	0	0	5	0	0		5
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Physical Trauma	2	1	0	0	0	0		3
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Fire/Burns</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Gunshot Wound</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Incised Wound</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Struck by Train</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asphyxia	5	0	0	0	0	0		5
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Drowning</i>	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Positional</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous	5	0	0	0	1	0		6
<i>Complications of Therapy</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Fall, Ground Level</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Fire/Explosion</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Non Traffic -Vehicle</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Natural	0	0	0	0	0	9		9
Undetermined/Unknown	0	0	0	0	1	0		1
Total	12	1	0	5	2	9		29

**Table 11-3 Causes of Death: Children 13 to 19 Years**

CIRCUMSTANCES	MANNER OF DEATH						SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	A	H	S	T	U	N		
Transportation related	0	0	0	29	0	0		29
<i>Bicycle</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motor vehicle driver</i>	0	0	0	10	0	0	10	
<i>Motor vehicle occupant</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
<i>Motor vehicle passenger</i>	0	0	0	10	0	0	10	
<i>Pedestrian</i>	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	
<i>Motorcycle</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Physical Trauma	2	10	6	0	0	0		18
<i>Blunt Impact</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Crushing</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Gunshot Wound</i>	0	7	6	0	0	0	13	
<i>Incised Wound/Stabbing</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Struck by Train/Object</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Drugs or alcohol exposure	3	0	1	0	2	0		6
Asphyxia	3	0	3	0	1	0		7
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Drowning</i>	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	
<i>Hanging</i>	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	
Miscellaneous	4	0	2	0	0	0		6
<i>Electrocution</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Falls</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	
<i>Jumping</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	
<i>Other</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Natural disease	0	0	0	0	0	3		3
Total	12	10	12	29	3	3		69